

USACHPPM

HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

1 July 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT TOPICS

Angiostatic Drug Treats Endometriosis

28 June – BBC News reported scientists say they have discovered a promising new therapy for [endometriosis](#), a condition which can cause infertility. It happens when tissue which normally lines the uterus is found elsewhere in the pelvis. Researchers say that the angiostatic drugs, which inhibit the development of new blood vessels, prevent these lesions growing. Around 10 to 25% of women of reproductive age are estimated to be affected by endometriosis. The condition is difficult to diagnose, and is sometimes missed by doctors and existing treatments are not always effective. The researchers transplanted human endometrial tissue which had been transplanted into 49 mice and allowed it to grow into lesions. They found that the treatments reduced the number of new blood vessels which developed around the tissue as well as the number of endometrial lesions. [View Article](#)

Bird Flu Mutating Into More Deadly Threat

28 June - Reuters Health reported that a frightening strain of [bird flu](#) that can kill people is mutating into an ever more deadly form in ducks and needs to be controlled quickly, according to U.S. and Chinese researchers. They found steady changes in the so-called H5N1 virus infecting flocks of apparently healthy ducks that made the virus more likely to kill mammals such as mice -- and perhaps people, too. The H5N1 virus was first seen in Hong Kong in 1997 and has reappeared in Southeast Asia, killing 24 people in Vietnam and Thailand this year. Unlike ordinary influenza, so far H5N1 cannot be spread from person to person, so it does not cause human epidemics. But flu experts say the virus, which mutates quickly, could acquire this ability at any time. They found some expected changes in genes associated with how deadly a virus is and said their findings suggest the virus is evolving. Different strains are infecting flocks around the world but the H5N1 strain is the one that most worries health experts. [View Article](#)

Chronic Stress Tied to Heart, Stroke Risks in Men

29 June - Reuters Health reported that a stress-filled life really does seem to raise the odds of [heart disease](#) and [stroke](#), according to a large study from Sweden. The researchers found that among more than 13,600 men and women followed since middle-age, those who reported chronic stress at the study's outset faced a somewhat higher risk of fatal or non-fatal heart disease or stroke over the years. The link was strong only among men, although a weak relationship between stress and cardiovascular ills was found in women, the study authors reported. The researchers found that participants who reported chronic stress at the study's start were 14 percent more likely to develop heart problems or suffer a stroke, regardless of other factors such as family history, body weight, smoking and high blood pressure. But it was men's risk of fatal stroke that showed the clearest relationship to stress; stressed-out men were twice as likely as their peers to die of a stroke. [View Source](#)

High Blood Pressure Associated with High Cholesterol

28 June – EurekAlert reported that people who have [high blood pressure](#) are highly likely to also have untreated or insufficiently treated cholesterol problems that significantly increase their risk for heart attack and stroke. "This points out both a serious problem and a significant opportunity to prevent disease of the heart and blood vessels," says Stephen Turner, M.D., the Mayo Clinic hypertension specialist who led the study. Investigators studied two hypertensive populations: 1,070 non-Hispanic whites, and 1,286 non-Hispanic blacks. About one-half of the blacks with high blood pressure also had high cholesterol ([hyperlipidemia](#)). More than three-fourths (78.4 percent) of the white male hypertensives - and 64.7 percent of the women - had hyperlipidemia. Among study subjects with both risk factors, fewer than one out of three were taking cholesterol-lowering medications (primarily statins), and less than one-half of those had reached recommended lipid levels. [View Article](#)

Low-Cost Household Water Filter Drastically Cut Diarrhea Rates

28 June – VOA News reported low-cost household water filters cut [diarrhea](#) rates substantially. The simple, low-tech filter systems could help reduce the number of child deaths in places where drinkable tap water is not available or reliable. Diarrhea causes an estimated 2.5 million deaths a year, and one in five child deaths in developing countries. Contaminated water is the main culprit. Researchers showed participants in a rural part of Bolivia how to build a simple water filter system. The filter removed bacteria that cause diarrhea, reducing disease rates by 70 percent. The disease reduction among young children was even better, at 83 percent. Researcher Joseph Brown at the University of North Carolina says people liked the filter system because it also makes their drinking water less cloudy. Brown also says the filter's simplicity was a big benefit. "And that's an important point as far as sustainability goes," he says. The filter systems cost about \$25 each. But while participants liked the filters, they said they were only willing to pay about \$10 for them. [View Article](#)

Nasal Vaccine Works against SARS

24 June – BBC News reported that US scientists have successfully developed a nasal spray version of [SARS](#) vaccine that works in monkeys. This is the third SARS vaccine made by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The previous two required two doses to work, had to be injected under the skin and had only been tested in rats. The new nasal vaccine needs only one dose and is delivered directly into the respiratory tract where SARS attacks. Like the previous two, the newest vaccine uses a small piece of the virus's DNA to stimulate the body's immune system to mount a protective response. [View Article](#)

New Approach to Combat Drug-resistant Staph Infections

24 June – Science Blog reported that coating implanted medical devices with a key peptide known as RIP can prevent the occurrence of bacterial colonization, biofilm formation and consequent drug-resistant [staphylococcus aureus infection](#) - a leading cause of illness and death among hospitalized patients. RIP acts by preventing bacterial cell-to-cell communication, a process known as 'quorum sensing'. This is the first direct demonstration that inhibiting cell-to-cell communication can prevent staphylococcal infections. [View Article](#)

Pentagon Expands Anthrax, Smallpox Vaccinations

30 June – Reuters Health reported that the Pentagon plans to expand the number of troops receiving [anthrax](#) and [smallpox](#) vaccinations to forces based in South Korea. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz called the Pentagon's vaccination programs to protect troops against exposure to these

germ warfare agents "a success." The memo said the expansion affected U.S. forces in South Korea and added to the numbers of troops deployed in the Middle East getting the shots. The Pentagon has faced a legal battle over the anthrax vaccinations for troops. The Defense Department resumed the vaccinations in January after a judge lifted a December order barring them without individual service members' consent. The judge's action came eight days after the Food and Drug Administration declared the vaccine safe and effective against the form of anthrax in which airborne bacterial spores are inhaled into the lungs -- the most likely way U.S. troops would face the disease on a battlefield.

[View Source](#)

Possible Therapy for Bleeding Strokes

27 June – The Washington Post reported that a hemophilia drug sharply cuts the chances that victims of the most devastating type of [stroke](#) will die or be severely disabled, providing the first possible treatment for brain hemorrhages. A study of 400 patients found that a single infusion of the drug, a synthetic version of a naturally occurring protein, given within three hours after onset cut by about one-third the risk of death or severe disability among patients in the midst of a bleeding stroke. This type of stroke hits about 80,000 Americans each year and about 2 million people worldwide. Although the drug, NovoSeven, probably requires additional testing before winning formal approval for use with stroke patients, experts predicted it would likely become the standard treatment and transform care for stroke patients. [View Article](#)

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Linked With Poor Health

28 June – EurekAlert reported that women with [posttraumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD) report having more illnesses and poorer health than women with depression alone. PTSD is a psychiatric disorder characterized by avoidance behaviors and interpersonal difficulties that can occur following experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening or particularly traumatic event, such as terrorism, rape or physical assault. Patients with depression and PTSD make up about 12 percent of primary care patients. The researchers found that among women younger than 45 years, 17 percent had a reported history of PTSD, and 25 percent had a reported history of depression. Among women aged 45 to 64 years, 17 percent had PTSD, and 28 percent had depression; and among women 65 years or older, 4 percent had PTSD, and 20 percent had depression. Across all ages, women with PTSD had more medical conditions and worse physical health status (poor physical functioning, role limitations due to physical problems, pain, low energy) than women with depression alone, or neither depression nor PTSD. [View Source](#)

RSV Can Increase the Risk of Asthma

28 June 28 – EurekAlert reported that a viral respiratory infection common in children increases the risk of developing [asthma](#). The study is the first to show a link between respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, infection and asthma in mice. A related study, also in mice, suggests that a medication neutralizing the virus could decrease children's chances of developing asthma. RSV is the leading cause of viral respiratory infections in infants and children worldwide. Half of all babies get an RSV infection within the first year of their life and by age 3 practically all have had at least one RSV infection. Earlier studies have found that treatment with an anti-RSV neutralizing antibody significantly reduced hospitalization rates in high-risk infants. Researchers tested the medication on mice and demonstrated that the anti-RSV antibody not only prevented the acute severe form of bronchitis but also prevented the long-term complications of the disease. [View Article](#)

'Search and Destroy' Protein Turns Tables on HIV

24 June – Science Blog reported a human protein that mutates the [AIDS](#) virus (HIV) and holds potential for keeping the disease at bay has been discovered and its function described by a team at the University of Minnesota. The new protein called APOBEC3F and one described previously, APOBEC3G can directly mutate HIV. Such proteins--called retroviral restrictors--may contribute to HIV resistance in some people. [View Article](#)

WHO Warns on Alternative Medicine

23 June - BBC News reported that the World Health Organization warns the unregulated use of [alternative medicines](#) can cause unpleasant or potentially dangerous reactions. It has issued new guidelines advising consumers on therapies ranging from acupuncture to herbal medicines and food supplements. They are aimed at helping those who buy complementary medicines over-the-counter and do not tell doctors. The WHO said that, although there were no global statistics on reactions to the medicines, individual countries were reporting problems. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Voluntary HIV Testing as Part of Routine Medical Care

25 June – MMWR reported that one of the four strategies of in CDC's 2003 *Advancing HIV Prevention: New Strategies for a Changing Epidemic* was to expand routine, voluntary human immunodeficiency virus ([HIV](#)) testing. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) AIDS Bureau implemented a program, called "Think HIV," that was designed to assist centers in routine HIV counseling and testing, facilitate patient follow-up for test results, and promote strategies for linkage to care. Of the 10,352 patients offered HIV testing, 68% declined testing; 89% of these were willing to answer inquiries about their refusal to undergo testing. The most common reasons for testing refusal included: 1) did not feel at risk for HIV (47%), and 2) tested for HIV before (42%). Among the 3,068 patients with completed test results, 60 were HIV-infected (HIV prevalence: 2.0%); of these, 49 (82%) returned for their results. Of the first 42 patients for whom linkage-to-care data were available, all 42 had at least one documented follow-up visit for HIV care. During the interview process, the program also identified six additional patients who reported they were known to be HIV-infected and who described themselves as either not having a doctor or not being in care. These patients were referred for follow-up HIV care. Four of these six patients had confirmed attendance at their first HIV care appointment. The findings underscore the effectiveness of routine HIV CTR in HIV case identification. [View Report](#)

DoD-GEIS: West Nile Virus

CDC reports that this year, as of 22 June, there have been 32 human cases of [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) disease from seven states, reported through ArboNET. Arizona and California appear to be at highest risk; 20 cases were reported from Arizona, six from California, two from Florida, and one case each from Nebraska, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Wyoming. California added four more after CDC's report bringing its total to 10 this year. Of the 32, 23 (72%) occurred in males; the median age was 52 years with a range of 9 to 78 years. Onset of illness ranged from May 8 to June 7. Neuroinvasive disease occurred in 16 (50%) of the reported patients, 14 (44%) had WN fever, and two (6%) were not specified. A total of 13 presumptive West Nile viremic blood donors, detected by routine PCR testing of donated blood, have been reported to ArboNET this year, 12 from Arizona and one from New

Mexico. Of the donors, one (age 69 years) developed neuroinvasive illness and three (ages 22, 51, and 52 years) had West Nile fever. Dead bird surveillance detected a total of 616 dead corvids and 58 other types with WNV infection from 20 states so far this year. In horses, 17 WNV infections have been reported from six states (Alabama, Arizona, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia). WNV sentinel chicken surveillance in four states has been positive (Arizona, California, Florida, and Louisiana). One seropositive sentinel horse was reported from Puerto Rico. Mosquito surveillance activities reported a total of 129 WNV-positive mosquito pools from eight states (Arizona, California, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Texas). Additional information about national WNV activity is available from [CDC](#) and [USGS](#). Information on many “hot topics” such as WNV is available on the [DoD-GEIS](#) website.

Other timely information can be found in:

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Epidemic of Abdominal Typhus in Tajikistan

An outbreak of abdominal typhus ([typhoid fever](#)) has been reported in the Hatlonskaya region in the southern part of Tajikistan. In this oblast (administrative territorial division), which borders Afghanistan, 79 cases have been officially recorded so far. According to the Republican sanitary epidemiological surveillance center, the main cause of the epidemic was the consumption of contaminated water. [View Article](#)

Kenyan Mosquitoes Not Insecticide Resistant

28 June – VOA News reported mosquitoes in Kenya have not developed widespread resistance to insecticide, as feared, after a major trial of insecticide-treated bed nets. A study involving some 55,000 people in Kenya found that insecticide-treated bed nets reduced mosquito populations and [malaria](#) transmission by 90 percent or more. But there has been concern that those benefits will not last, as mosquitoes develop resistance to the insecticide. The latest research found that the percentage of mosquitoes with one resistance trait doubled over the course of the study but was still only about eight percent. Researchers caution that resistance to the insecticide may become a problem in the future because evolution does not stand still. [View Source](#)

Kyrgyzstan: Health Situation Remains Grim In Prisons

23 June – Irin News reported that health conditions in Kyrgyzstan's burgeoning prison system remain a source of concern for health officials in the mountainous Central Asian state. According to the National AIDS Centre of Kyrgyzstan, the main mode of [HIV/AIDS](#) transmission is injecting drug usage. The official number of HIV-infected people in the country was 543 by June 2004, of which 82 percent were injecting drug users and some 100 infected were inmates serving their terms. Besides HIV/AIDS, many prisoners in Kyrgyzstan are infected with [TB](#), [hepatitis](#) and [sexually transmitted diseases](#) (STDs). The most widespread diseases among the prisoners are HIV/AIDS and TB. "The problem is that in our country we undergo, so to speak, triple 'infection': drug addiction, which leads to

AIDS, and AIDS which in turn leads to TB. Thus, 95 percent of AIDS patients die from TB," according to Boris Shapiro, head of the National AIDS Centre. The main reasons for the growth in these diseases in the prisons are inadequate sanitation and hygiene conditions, insufficient nutrition and, of course, a shortage of necessary medicines and the absence of modern medical equipment in hospitals run by the Department of Corrections. According to the Justice Ministry's estimates, 2,000 out of 17,000 prisoners serving their terms were infected with an "open" (easily contractible) form of TB in 2003. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever - Serbia & Montenegro

26 June – ProMED reported that four new cases of suspected [Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever](#) (CCHF) were reported in the Prizren region. Officials of the Regional Institute of Public Health said that the overall number of persons suspected of having contracted this disease has reached 19 -- 3 of whom were confirmed officially in Ljubljana. The coordinator of the Regional Institute of Public Health in Prizren, Dr Nurishahe Hulaj, said that she had received a report on 4 new cases of CCHF in the Malisheve municipality. Two of these cases occurred in the village of Caralluke, one in Lladrovc and one in Gollubovc. She said that those suspected of having contracted this disease first went to the Family Medicine Centre in Malisheve, and were then sent for medical treatment at the infectious disease clinic in Prishtina. [View Report](#)

Nigerian Polio Outbreak Hits New Heights, Threatens Region

29 June – Yahoo! News reported that Nigeria's fast-growing [polio](#) outbreak now accounts for more than three-quarters of the world's fresh cases of the crippling disease and threatens children across west Africa. The World Health Organisation (WHO) said that by June 23 it had confirmed 257 new victims of polio in Nigeria. The outbreak is centered in the northern Nigerian city of Kano. In March, Nigeria saw the "highest ever-recorded" monthly incidence of wild polio virus, with 85 confirmed cases across the country. As of April, only six of the 36 states in Nigeria were polio-free and the worst is yet to come as Nigeria's annual rains intensify in August and September. There have been 44 new cases of polio in west Africa outside Nigeria since last year when officials in parts of Muslim northern Nigeria began refusing to administer oral polio vaccine to children. In March, Kano's state government refused to take part in a United Nations-led campaign to vaccinate west African children against polio, following a campaign by Islamic clerics against the vaccine in use. Some local preachers alleged that the vaccine had been laced with fertility hormones by western agents as part of a US-led bid to sterilize African girls. International health experts dismissed the claims. Kano suspended vaccination, saying that it preferred to import "safe" vaccines produced in an Islamic country. On May 27 Kano said that it was testing polio vaccines made in Indonesia and was waiting for the results. [View Article](#)

Russia: 19 People in Ulyanovsk Region Bitten by Rabid Dog

24 June - ProMED reported that in the Zavolshsk district of the Ulyanovsk region, a [rabid](#) dog has bitten 19 people, more half of whom are children. The dog was caught and brought to a veterinary service clinic where the diagnosis was confirmed. All those known to have been bitten by the dog have been vaccinated, and their lives are no longer considered to be at risk. However, physicians are worried that other people possibly bitten by the dog might have suffered only minor injury and have not sought medical attention. As a consequence all local radio and television channels are broadcasting information warning of the danger and stressing the necessity for immediate vaccination of feral and domestic dogs. [View Article](#)

Russia: Tickborne Encephalitis Outbreak in Republic of Altai

28 June – ProMED reported that the Republic of Altai, with its 203,000 inhabitants, is one of the most favorable places for [tickborne diseases](#) in Russia. In the past 2 weeks, the number of people bitten by ticks has increased almost 50 per cent from 515 to 732, 154 of whom are children. The total number of patients admitted to hospital has risen to 103, which is higher than the comparable number for the corresponding period of 2003. The head of the Epidemiological Surveillance Center, Valentina Mednikova, stated that 45 residents of the Altai Republic have been diagnosed with tickborne encephalitis, 53 with tickborne typhus (rickettsioses), and 5 with tickborne borreliosis [Lyme disease]. [View Source](#)

USNORTHCOM

Asthma: Nearly an Epidemic

28 June – The Baltimore Sun reported that between 1980 and 1996, the number of [asthma](#) cases nearly doubled nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says 16 million people suffer from it, or about 1 in 12 people. Asthma is a chronic disease characterized by recurrent inflammation of the lungs that makes it difficult to breathe. Nationwide, summer heat prompts a spike in asthma attacks, as sunlight cooks emissions from factories and cars, creating ozone that irritates the lungs. No one knows what causes asthma. But it disproportionately targets children and minorities, kills 5,000 people a year in the United States and costs the nation \$6 billion a year for treatment. Worldwide, the number of asthmatics is expected to jump from 300 million to 400 million in the next 20 years. Researchers began focusing on asthma about 10 years ago when officials at CDC and other researchers first noted the jump in cases. A 2001 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association found a ban on car traffic in downtown Atlanta during the 1996 Olympics lead to a 44 percent decline in asthma-related treatments in hospitals and health care centers. But experts remain stumped as to what exactly causes asthma and how it attacks the body. [View Article](#)

Canadian Doctors Alarmed Over Syphilis Outbreak

29 June – The Advocate reported that Canadian doctors are alarmed by the nation's five-fold increase in new [syphilis](#) cases during the past five years, raising worries that many Canadians are no longer practicing safer sex. New syphilis cases nearly doubled between 2002 and 2003, while [chlamydia](#) rates increased about 70%, and [gonorrhea](#) diagnoses increased 40%. The syphilis outbreak is occurring mostly among gay and bisexual men, health officials say, leaving physicians and health experts looking for new ways to educate at-risk youths and adults about the importance of safer sex. [View Article](#)

Cardiologists Laud Blood Treatment

30 June – The Globe and Mail reported that an unorthodox 'immune modulation therapy' holds promise for patients with [heart failure](#). This patented therapy involves taking about 10 cubic centimeters of blood (two teaspoons), then putting it into a machine that "stresses" the blood by subjecting it to heat, oxidation, and UV light. Those stresses are designed to induce apoptosis (cell death) in white blood cells, those that influence the body's immune response. When this zapped blood is re-injected into the patient, the dying cells trigger a powerful immune response. What that means is the inflammatory process, which can be toxic to the heart, is slowed. Inflammation can damage the arteries and lead to a narrowing of the blood vessels, a principal cause of heart disease. In

preliminary research, immune modulation therapy resulted in a sharp reduction in symptoms among heart failure patients. This leads researchers to believe the approach could slow the progression of heart failure, or even reverse some of the damage. [View Article](#)

Cost Cited As Reason for Not Seeking Mental Health Services

28 June – EurekAlert reported that insurance coverage problems and costs supplant stigma as the number one obstacle to accessing mental health services according to a survey commissioned by the American Psychological Association. Americans say it's lack of insurance coverage (87%) or cost (81%) that most keeps them from seeing a mental health professional with 65% citing lack of insurance coverage as a very important reason for not seeking treatment. Survey results also show that 85% of Americans say health insurance should cover mental health services and that 97% of Americans believe access to mental health services is important with nearly three in four considering such services very important, on par with dental care. The Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act (S. 486/H.R. 953) would put insurance coverage for mental health services on par with physical health services. The bill also improves the 1996 Parity Act by requiring parity for coinsurance, deductibles, day and visit limits and maximum out of pocket caps. More than 44 million Americans suffer from a mental health disorder. According to the U.S. Surgeon General's 1999 report, only one third of people suffering from a mental health disorder receive treatment. [View Source](#)

Leeches Latest Addition to America's Medical Arsenal

28 June – HealthDay reported that leeches, a medical tool for thousands of years, are poised for a comeback. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared the way for the commercial marketing of the blood-sucking, fresh-water animals for medicinal purposes. Leeches can help heal skin grafts by removing blood pooled under the graft and restore blood circulation in blocked veins by removing pooled blood. Leeches have been used as an alternative treatment to blood-letting and amputation for several thousand years. They reached their height of medicinal use in the mid-1800s. Today, they are used throughout the world as tools in skin grafts and reattachment surgery, the FDA said, in announcing its decision. A French firm that has been breeding leeches for 150 years is the first company to request and receive FDA clearance to market leeches as medical devices. [View Article](#)

New York Mandates Fire-Safe Cigarettes

28 June – HealthDay reported that New York is the first state to require fire-safe cigarettes designed to extinguish themselves if not puffed regularly. The law is meant to cut down on the number of smoking-related fires. The cigarettes are wrapped in ultra-thin banded paper than inhibits burning. Makers of the new models warn, however, that while the cigarettes may go out on their own, they still are capable of starting fires. Some 900 Americans die and another 2,500 are hurt by fires started by unattended cigarettes, the AP said. Packs of cigarettes that comply with the new law will bear a tiny mark next to the bar code -- an asterisk, dash, or diamond, the wire service said. [View Article](#)

Number of Cancer Survivors Triples

25 June – CBS News reported the number of [cancer](#) survivors in the United States has more than tripled to almost 10 million over the past three decades because of advances in detection and treatment. Also, patients diagnosed between 1995 and 2000 have an estimated 64 percent chance of surviving five years, compared with a 50 percent rate three decades ago. The number of cancer survivors - defined as anyone diagnosed with cancer, no matter how recently - soared from 3 million in 1971 to 9.8 million in 2001. That number is likely to continue increasing as the population ages,

because cancer risks increase with age. The government wants to increase the overall five-year survival rate to 70 percent by 2010. [View Article](#)

Quiznos Holds Hepatitis Clinic

29 June – Boston Channel.com reported that for the second time this month, customers of local restaurants were lining up for treatment because of a [hepatitis](#) scare. Health officials estimate that 600 to 1,000 people could have been exposed to the virus and will need immunoglobulin shots. The free clinic comes less than two weeks after 2,000 people were inoculated in Arlington after an employee at the Friendly's there was infected. "It is not a chronic disease. You may look sick, you could be sick for a few weeks, very tired, nauseous, could be jaundice, but then you will be immune for life and you will not get a reoccurrence of it," said Boston Public Health Commission's Kristen O'Connor. [View Article](#)

State of America's Health

28 June – A New York Times editorial reflected on an article published in the summer of 2000 in The Journal of the American Medical Association, in which Dr. Barbara Starfield of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine compared health conditions here to those in other industrialized countries. She wrote, "Of 13 countries in a recent comparison, the United States ranks an average of 12th for 16 available health indicators." She said the U.S. came in 13th, dead last, in terms of low birth weight percentages; 13th for neonatal mortality and infant mortality over all; 13th for years of potential life lost (excluding external causes); 11th for life expectancy at the age of 1 for females and 12th for males; and 10th for life expectancy at the age of 15 for females and 12th for males. She noted in the article that more than 40 million Americans lacked health insurance (the figure is about 43 million now) and she described the state of Americans' health as "relatively poor." The author spoke recently with Dr. Starfield and asked whether the situation had improved over the last four years. "It's getting worse," she said, noting, "We've done a lot more studies in terms of the international comparisons. We've done them a million different ways. The findings are so robust that I think they're probably incontrovertible." Echoing so many other patient advocates, she continues to call for movement on two crucial needs: coverage for the many millions who currently do not have access to care, and the development of a first-rate primary care system. [View Article](#)

USDA Awaits Further Testing In Possible BSE Case

28 June - CIDRAP News reported that the US Department of Agriculture found an "inconclusive" or preliminary positive, test result in its screening program for [bovine spongiform encephalopathy](#) (BSE) and is awaiting confirmatory test results. The inconclusive result was the first since the USDA expanded its BSE testing program in an effort to test more than 200,000 cattle over the next 12 to 18 months. In announcing the finding, Dr. John Clifford, deputy administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), said confirmatory tests would be completed in 4 to 7 days. He said the animal did not enter the human food supply or animal feed. Clifford said the USDA "remains confident in the safety of the US beef supply." [View Text](#)

Waxman: U.S. Imposes New Limits on Scientists

25 June – Reuters Health reported that the U.S. government is making it harder for scientists to speak to their global colleagues and restricting who can attend an upcoming major AIDS conference, according to Rep. Henry Waxman. He has a letter showing that the Health and Human Services Department has imposed new limits on who may speak to the World Health Organization. Under the new policy, WHO must ask HHS for permission to speak to scientists and must allow HHS to choose who will respond. "This policy is unprecedented. For the first time political appointees will routinely be

able to keep the top experts in their field from responding to WHO requests for guidance on international health issues," the California Democrat wrote in a letter to HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson. Waxman also complained that HHS had cut back a list of scientists planning to attend the International AIDS Society conference in Bangkok, Thailand, next month. The conference is considered the premiere meeting for AIDS experts. [View Source](#)

USPACOM

Malaria Downs 122 in South Cotabato, Philippines

29 June – ProMED reported that the provincial government of South Cotabato has intensified its operations against an outbreak of [malaria](#), which has afflicted at least 122 people in five municipalities over the last few weeks. Arnold Giniseran, team leader of the provincial health office's malaria control program, said, "These case numbers are quite higher than the same period last year," adding that no deaths have been reported. Giniseran said they are currently conducting massive malaria eradication activities in the affected areas. These include case finding and treatment, particularly the collection of smears, treatment of symptomatic patients and confirmation of positive cases, and distributing treated mosquito nets. He said that houses of affected residents are sprayed with disinfectants. "We also conduct massive information dissemination and capability building training to rural health midwives and barangay health workers," Giniseran added. [View Report](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Jungle Yellow Fever in Peru and Bolivia

24 June – EID Weekly Updates stated that as of 23 June 2004, the Ministries of Health of Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Bolivia reported to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) the occurrence of 86 confirmed cases of [Jungle Yellow Fever](#) (JYF), with 41 deaths. In all the countries, cases occurred predominantly among males over the age of 15 who work in the countryside. Peru has reported 52 cases, with a case-fatality rate of 52%. Another 31 suspected cases are undergoing epidemiological and laboratory investigation. Bolivia has reported 9 cases with a fatality rate of 40%. Another 3 suspected cases are pending laboratory confirmation. Brazil has reported 3 cases. Colombia has reported 22 cases, with a case-fatality rate of 36%. These cases are a continuation of the extensive outbreak that began in 2003. The occurrence of outbreaks increases the risk of the reurbanization of Yellow Fever. The PAHO Technical Advisory Group on Vaccinations has recommended that the countries vaccinate all persons residing in enzootic areas in the Americas for Yellow Fever, as well as all travelers to those areas, and introduce routine vaccination for children against the disease. [View Report](#)

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